

# THE RICH YOUNG RULER

By Kevin Caldwell

## Mark 10:17-22

(17) As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (18) And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone. (19) "You know the commandments, 'DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, Do not defraud, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.'" (20) And he said to Him, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up." (21) Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." (22) But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property. (N.A.S. B.)

Before we look at this passage, I'd like to read three expressions (found on the internet) of what some have said the gospel is, or what you must do to be saved. You may have heard similar expressions. Maybe you even believe some of these or variances of some of these...

### 1.) On Becoming a Christian (some of the Q & A's)

Q: Do I have to give up everything bad overnight?

A: No. Jesus wants you to come to Him warts & all & it is the work of the Holy Spirit to help us become more like Jesus.

Q: Is it really as simple as you make it out?

A: I really don't make it out. It is the bible which tells us how simple it is.

The authors here have 4 paragraphs, for what is called a 2 minute gospel. The last paragraph says:

"Once we say we are sorry to God He will take away our sin and make us a brand new person (2 Cor. 5:17), a Christian. He also gives us the free gift of eternal life. This means that when we die the next phase of our life begins, spending eternity with Jesus."

And again the authors say:

"**Make the decision** to do it and **simply** pray the following prayer..." (emphasis mine)

Then the writers give 3 steps on growing in Christ (Read, pray, & meeting with the likeminded).

### 2.) Are You Preaching The Gospel

"It is true that where sin abounded grace has much more abounded; well then, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound yet further?" The true preaching of the gospel of salvation by grace alone always leads to the possibility of this charge being brought against it. There is no better test as to whether a man is really preaching the New Testament gospel than this, that some people might misunderstand it and mis-interpret it that it really amounts to this: that because you are saved by grace alone, it does not really matter at all WHAT you do, you can go on sinning all you like because it will rebound all the more to the glory of grace. That is a very good test of gospel preaching. If my preaching of the gospel does not expose it to that misunderstanding, then it is not the gospel. Let me show you what I mean. If a man preaches justification by works, no one would ever raise the question. If he says, "If you want to go to heaven, you must stop committing sins, live a life filled with good works, and keep this up regularly and constantly until the end, then you will be a Christian and go to heaven when you die." Obviously, no one will accuse a man who preached like this of saying, "Let us continue in sin that grace may abound." But every preacher who preached the gospel has been accused of this! They have all been accused of "antinomianism." I would say to all preachers: **IF YOUR PREACHING OF SALVATION HAS NOT BEEN MISUNDERSTOOD IN THAT WAY, THEN YOU HAD BETTER EXAMINE YOUR SERMONS AGAIN**, and you had better make sure that you really ARE preaching the salvation that is proclaimed in the New Testament to the

ungodly, the sinner, to those who are dead in trespasses and sins, to those who are the enemies of God. There is a kind of dangerous element about the true presentation of the doctrine of salvation.”

### 3.) The Terms of Salvation

Now read carefully! The greater glory of the New Covenant is *not* that the standards or laws have been either lowered or done away. It is *not* that the moral duties demanded on the Tables of Stone are no longer binding on a Christian. No, No, that is to miss the whole point. The greater glory of the New Covenant is that **no obedience at all is required as the terms of being saved** simply because the very terms of the Tablets of the Covenant have been *finally and fully met in the Person and work of Surety*, the Lord Jesus Christ. The glory of the New Covenant is in the words, "IT IS FINISHED." (Emphasis mine)

As you have read, the gospel today has been reduced to believing a set of facts or by repeating some magical formula. Salvation has been accomplished by God, through His Son, and is offered as a free gift to any, to all, who will but just receive it. It is a gift from the God of heaven towards mankind if they will but choose to accept it. Just Accept it, Believe it, and Confess your need for Him; A, B, C. And God will do the rest! This is much too common a view in our day.

**But is this the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ? Does the bible really say it is a simple matter to be saved? (1<sup>st</sup> gospel expression) Was the gospel Jesus taught accused of antinomianism (2<sup>nd</sup> gospel expression); or stated differently, did Jesus teach a gospel in which the moral law is of no use or obligation because faith alone is all that necessary for salvation (that’s the dictionary definition of antinomianism)? Is no obedience at all required as the terms of being saved? (3<sup>rd</sup> gospel expression)**

**Or how about this: Is repentance even necessary for salvation? Does obedience to Christ not have any connection to faith or believing on Him? What does Jesus require of us? What must you do to inherit eternal life?**

We are looking at the account of the Rich Young Ruler in Marks gospel, chapter 10:17-22. This was his very question, “What must I do to inherit eternal life”. So how did Jesus answer him? Variances of this account may also be found in the Gospel of Matthew 19:16-22 & in the Gospel of Luke 18:18-23.

**Verse 17** – “As He was setting out on a journey, a man ran up to Him and knelt before Him, and asked Him, "Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

“As He was setting out on a journey”, - Jesus is about to leave the region and He is stopped. It appears it’s the man’s last chance to ask his question; to meet with Jesus face-to-face before He leaves. It’s as if he had just heard that Jesus was in the area. So he runs up to Him and falls on his knees before Him. This reflects the man was quite anxious.

Kneeling before Jesus also indicates this was an act of humble submission. He knew he had come to the right person and kneeling was an expression of his readiness to receive what Jesus had to say.

He was **wealthy**. “...he was one who owned much property” (v. 22) Luke’s account (18:23) says, “...he was extremely rich”.

Matthews account says **he was a young man** (19:22). And because of his position of authority, a devout, honest man with his great wealth. We also know he was quite **wealthy** because of the way this story concludes.

And Luke’s account (18:18) calls this one running, **“a certain ruler”** (KJV). He had authority. He could have been a civil ruler or possibly a ruler in the synagogue. If in the synagogue, he would have had to be a religious leader of the Pharisee’s, since his question indicates he believes in life after death – unlike the Sadducee’s who did not believe there was a resurrection of the dead. This ruler wanted eternal life.

So he's wealthy, young, and holds a prominent position before the people. And that's why he's most likely subtitled in your bibles as, "*The rich young ruler*".

**Note:** It appears unusual or unexpected that this prominent & influential young man, who had it all, would go to Jesus *publicly* and admit he lacked eternal life. Now when I say *publicly*, I'm not speaking among the saved, in a local church, where it's amongst those who publicly are encouraged to do so. This was unprompted in the outdoors, "publicly", and before all. All saw this ruler's lack & desperation.

And it appears to be an urgent question. *He ran!* He ran, stopped, and knelt before the Lord – calling Him "Good Master". And all saw this. This was an acknowledgement that he was in an undesirable situation. He apparently had heard something of our Lords teachings, maybe even much, for this event took place within the last 3 months of Jesus' ministry. None-the-less, his burning question was,

**"What must I do to inherit eternal life?"**

A question must be asked here. Did he ask the wrong question – one consisting of works for a reward?

I believe it was a fair question. Coming from one who is in a position of authority (a ruler), he kneels, reflecting he trusted Jesus for an answer who had a higher authority. By his running towards Jesus, we see a confidence (i.e. in who to go to), an earnestness (calling Jesus "Good Master"), and even a sense of desperation – he ran! There is a word for all of this – he revered Jesus. Reverence is to feel or show honor; to give deference to; to come to Jesus with a sense of submission – ready to obey. This is a sincere, honest heart – not a question disguising trickery or ill will, like Pharisee's generally would. And by Jesus' answer in verse 21, his departure of great sorrow in verse 22 reveals the genuineness of this urgency he had from the beginning. He was asking Jesus the question, like the Philippian jailer, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30) He desperately wanted/desired eternal life! With any of his religious background he may have had, he sensed he lacked eternal life.

**Thought question:** If someone ran to you, desperately asking, "What must I do to have eternal life", what motive would you think they had; an honest one or one of works? How would you know?

By their disposition of pride or humility: If they reflected desperation, you would sense the honesty behind their question. Without that desperation or serious concern in asking this question, then the motive could vary from simple curiosity to spite, or just simply making another good decision in their daily affairs of life.

But this young man sensed desperately, he lacked eternal life.

### **Verses 18-19**

"And Jesus said to him, **"Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments, 'DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, Do not defraud, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.'"**

It very likely that this young ruler did not know he was speaking with God in human flesh face to face, but instead an especially gifted teacher. As a religious ruler, he may have rejected Jesus as the coming Messiah, but unknowingly he may have just recognized Jesus as a gifted teacher in calling him, "Good Master". So, Jesus may have been drawing attention to His divinity, by asking, "Why do you call Me good?" Jesus appears to be spurring on this mans faith by drawing attention to God and God's character as reflected in the Law. As if to say, "Do you believe what God requires of you? Then do it?" Regardless of what this young ruler had heard or knew of Jesus, if he initially fell short of acknowledging Jesus as the coming Messiah, this would not be the *root cause* of his coming short of eternal life; for the conclusion of this story tells us differently, as we shall see.

So he was confident he came to the right source for an answer to his urgent question. So Jesus draws attention to what "goodness" is: God and God's Decalogue, "You know the Commandments".

In Matthew's (19:17) gospel, Jesus says, "Keep the Commandments", i.e., God's Commandments. It appears that Jesus was saying to this religious ruler, "Don't you know what to do... why are you asking Me... you know the God of the scriptures & His Commandments, keep them!"

Then Jesus lists 6 of them, which come from the latter half of the Law of Moses.

**"DO NOT MURDER"** *Thought question:*

When mistreated, whose life do you ultimately consider of more value – yours or theirs? Do you seek revenge or wish that they were dead? Mankind will kill or speak against to further their ultimate end.

**"DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY"** *Thought question:*

As Christian parents, we would all say we value the chastity of our daughters, and our sons towards our neighbor's daughters. But we are all sons and daughters of someone, right? Do your eyes value the chastity of others outside of marriage?

**"DO NOT STEAL"** *Thought question:*

Do you value another's property as you would value your own? Is your property of more value than another's? How do you look upon what others have or rightfully are due them?

**"DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS"** *Thought question:*

Would you speak evil of someone's character, or gossip on another's failures to ruin any good name they may have at all?

**"Do not defraud"**

Marks gospel is the only one which adds this commandment, "Do not defraud", which is an abstraction of the 10<sup>th</sup> commandment on coveting, and it speaks in this way, "Be content with what you have & do not attempt to add to it at the expense of someone else's things".

**"HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER"** *Thought question:*

Do you heed the strong considerations of your parent's wisdom in life? Or is your heart and tongue against their councils or due respect? (Title vs. actions)

Now if Jesus were to say, "Go to church, get involved with some of the programs, take on a ministry, and be sure to tithe on your income", I'd say this would be more palatable to our fleshly weaknesses. And this appears to be what most churches drive their congregations towards. But Jesus said, "Keep the commandments".

Is this what you would tell someone if they ask you how to be saved; "Keep the Commandments"?

**So what was Jesus asking of the young ruler? I believe there's a twofold answer:**

1. The law was given to give us knowledge of sin, Romans 3:20.

The Pharisees believed keeping God's Law was the means of personal righteousness. And it is no different today. Men deceive themselves with wrong thinking, in that they keep the commandments of God. And they are quite confident of righteousness in themselves. However, the Apostle Paul said in Romans 7:9-12:

"I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment deceived me and through it killed me. So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good." (ESV)

Here, the apostle Paul acknowledged the same thing happened to himself, that, so long as the power of the law was unknown to him, he believed that he was alive; and after he knew what the law did do, a deadly wound was inflicted on him. So the law was given to give all of us the knowledge of sin.

2. God does require obedience for terms of salvation. (we'll see this as we advance in this lesson)

Can you have grace or forgiveness w/o obedience, or a better question, does God grant grace or forgiveness to the unrepentant rebellious? No! He did not with the Pharisee's.

John 14:15 says, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

But does Jesus require *this* as His terms for salvation?

**Luke 10:25-29** says,

And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" And He said to him, "**What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?**" And he answered, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." And He said to him, "**You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE.**" But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

"As written in the Law", - right out of Deut. 6:5 & Leviticus 19:18. This lawyer sums up all that was written in the Law & the prophets of the Old Covenant. And Jesus says, "Do this & you will live".

**Is that true? If the lawyer would have loved God with all his being and his neighbor likewise, would he have had eternal life?**

Jesus said it was so! Jesus indeed requires obedience in His terms of salvation. The Commandments are a test/gage of devotion & love. The gage of our love relationship for Christ is in our motive of repentance & obedience to Him. The law reflects our lack of love for God and man or our motive of selfish gain.

There is a love relationship between repentance & obedience. If you do not *want* (desire) to obey God in some of the things He may ask of you and maybe even has asked of you, you are not repentant! If there are some people you just will not forgive; some people's misfortunes you take pleasure in, because of your distaste for what they've said or done - then you are not repentant! And yet you expect others to forgive or overlook your unkind words and careless actions. Like the lawyer who wished to justify himself on defining who his neighbor was in whom he needed to love, (this was the story of the Good Samaritan).

How many would have heaven, if they might have it on their terms. But how few will comply with God's terms. His terms will test your love & devotion, to God & to your neighbor. Will you do whatever Jesus asks of you? ***Do you really love Him? Do you really believe what He asks of you?***

Again, will God grant grace and forgiveness to the unrepentant, or is it to the repentant?

**Verse 19** again, - "**You know the commandments, 'DO NOT MURDER, DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, DO NOT STEAL, DO NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS, Do not defraud, HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER.'**"

Again, Jesus only mentions 6 of the Commandments which come from the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the table of Moses. Jesus sums these up in Matthews account by saying, "**YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.**" (Matthew 19:19)

So the young man replies in **verse 20** saying,

"Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up."

**Is the young ruler no longer asking "*the question*"; is he now defending himself/justifying himself; was he, like the lawyer, justifying himself or did he actually keep the latter half of the tablets given to Moses?**

Again, it's an honest answer. He's no different than any man today. He did not sense his own sinfulness; the law was dead to him like the apostle Paul in Romans 7, we just spoke of. He actually believed he was a good person, worthy by keeping these commandments which deal with our relationship with man. And Matthew's account enforces this by adding, "What am I still lacking"? (Matt. 19:20)

And until the Law exposes any of our hearts to God's holy calling, we too will not see any need of salvation from ourselves; there will not be a need for freedom from ourselves & our sin & true freedom to love!

Proper evangelism must lead a sinner to measure him/her self against the perfect Law of God and bring that person to hate their sin and to a desperate submission to Christ. The young ruler already *felt* some *disposition* to obey. And he had some desperation in his urgent question. But his understanding was dull to the Commandments of God, for he still senses something is lacking in his answer he gave Jesus, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up."

**Verse 21** – "Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, **"One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."**

Jesus draws from the 6 Commandments given and personalizes them to this rich young man. Jesus' response was not a new commandment, but an extraction of the six (and even the absent 4 Commandments from the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the stone table of Moses), to expose what this rich man lacked.

**So what did Jesus really say the rich man lacked? Why was he to go and sell & give it to the poor? He lacked freedom to love; that is, freedom to love God & man.**

By selling all, this would free him to truly love God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength. And by giving it to the poor, (not charity or to the synagogue), this was an expression of loving his neighbor as himself.

So should you go and sell all your possessions & give it all to the poor? If need be... Money has a way of polluting us. If this will free you to love the Lord with all your heart, and all with your mind & with all your strength; and likewise in giving it to the poor, loving your neighbor as yourself, then like Jesus said, "Do this, and you will live"! Are you desperate enough to be free to love selflessly?

Someone might say, "That doesn't mean everyone should sell what they have, does it? If everyone did that would be chaos." But my question would be, "Why are you worried with the question? Do you, also, feel possessive of what you have? Do you fear that Jesus may require you to do something that would cost you too much? What are you afraid of? And what do you fear? Did not Jesus say in Luke 14:33,

**"So then, none of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions"?**

And in Matthew 6:24,

**"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."**

This was the rich man's downfall. He had an idol; if not removed, it would continue to rob him of genuine devotion to God! And by holding onto his wealth, he would not have eternal life nor ever know of the great treasure he would have of heaven.

One's heart should always be ready to do what Jesus asks. And His bidding will lead us to deny ourselves and pick up His cross and follow Him, if we love Him! The answer Jesus gave this rich young ruler was designed to surmise the commandments, and yet, they are an expansion of any single commandment. This was a confrontation to this mans living offense against the holiness of God. And a covetous man will never be a liberal giver to mankind of God's bestowal.

The rich young ruler may have longed for the blessings of God, that is, what God could do for him – but not for God alone. God is a jealous God and deserves the reverence which is due to Him. Reverence again I say, coming with a heart of how can I honor & glorify you; "What will Thou have me to do?" God is not obligated to do anything for those who still have other gods before them, or any personal precious commodity, like covetous A'chan in Joshua chapter 7 who was stoned because he hid/buried the idolatrous treasure from the forbidden spoils of Jericho in his tent.

***What are you hiding? Have you truly exchanged your riches for heavens?***

Mark's account here in verse 21 says, "Jesus felt a love for him".

Another translation says it this way "Jesus felt a genuine love for him" (New Living Translation).

**What kind of love is this Jesus had for him? Is it genuine? Did Jesus actually desire that the young man turn from his idolatry and follow Him? Was this an indiscriminate offer of mercy?**

Seems real to me! Why would you tell him what is lacking if you do not actually care for him?

**Does Jesus have a harsh indifference to the misery of his enslavement or does Jesus lack the conscious ability to renovate his soul?** We want to protect God's sovereign grace at the expense of the rich man's responsibility to repent! For how can God have any sincere offer of mercy, when the rich man is totally incapable of responding in the first place? But as Charles Spurgeon says, "Now was God sincere in His offer? God forgive the man who dares to say He was not. God is undoubtedly sincere in every act He did."

As **Ezekiel 18:23-24; 31-32** says,

"(23) Do I have any pleasure in the death of the wicked," declares the Lord GOD, "rather than that he should turn from his ways and live? (24) But when a righteous man turns away from his righteousness, commits iniquity and does according to all the abominations that a wicked man does, will he live? All his righteous deeds which he has done will not be remembered for his treachery which he has committed and his sin which he has committed; for them he will die."

(31) "Cast away from you all your transgressions which you have committed and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! For why will you die, O house of Israel? (32) "For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone who dies," declares the Lord GOD. "Therefore, repent and live."

Let me ask this: **If the rich young ruler sold all he had & gave it to the poor, and then followed Jesus, would he have had eternal life? Could he have had it when Jesus offered it to him?**

YES! That's what Jesus said. This was a genuine love offer!

Let me stretch this point a little more: What about Judas Iscariot? If Judas, (of whom the Scripture had to be fulfilled & went to his own place – Acts 1:16; 25), had counted the 30 pieces of silver as of no value and then ran back after Jesus, as He was taken away, and exclaimed, "I too am one of His followers, I am the one deserving punishment; please Master, can you forgive me for what I have done to you – indeed, I have betrayed innocent blood?", would Jesus have forgiven him unto life eternal? YES AGAIN, if you believe this is what makes him (or any man) morally responsible before God!

Do you love others enough to give them this gospel; do you even care if they perish into eternity? If duty is your calling, then you have failed to love your neighbor at all, & are no better than the Pharisee's. If you are fearful of calling them to repentance, and just present Jesus as the free gift without any authority or demand on their life, then haven't you misrepresented the gospel Jesus spoke of here?

How false and deceitful our hearts can be! We persuade ourselves we've shared the gospel, when indeed we have come short, nor have we shed any tears for the many souls around us each day. We are not perfect or complete until we will do whatever God requires of us!

Jesus challenged this mans affections. He had to make a choice between Jesus and his personal possessions. He would not repent. He would not obey. He loved the wrong thing(s).

***If Jesus was to put His finger on your heart's affections, what would He find?***

**Verse 22** - "But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property."

The rich young ruler had been accustomed to the ease, and leisure, and conveniences, of home, so he had never experienced, in the smallest degree, what it was to crucify the old man, and to subdue the desires of the flesh. He owned much! And what he owned, owned him.

**If the young ruler would have been asked if he believed on the Son of Man, apart from his exposure to the Law, would he have walked away.... & grieved at that?**

The gospel presented today has no background to it. God's anger against the sins of the godless in this world cannot be seen when all that's presented is, "God loves you & has a wonderful plan for your life". It's not about you & your happiness; it's all about Jesus and how every knee which should bow unto Him! Neither can God justify you at the expense of His justice; He is a holy God! His wrath had to be satisfied! Jesus bore our sins in God's wrath in the crucifixion! Can you or anyone come to the Christ who was delivered over because of our transgressions, taking upon Himself the wrath of God which is due to us, and yet, come without any contrition over your sins or desire to please Him at all?

"Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid!" Romans 6:1-2

Now though keeping the commandments will not make one a Christian, most assuredly *living* in willful violation of them speaks that you are not. As Titus 2:11-12 says, "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age". (NKJV)

How many people have any of you led to the Lord Jesus Christ, in which are now still living in sin? How many souls have you counseled with & now looking back see self deception – that is, the Law was dead to them? Do you know what gospel you are teaching? Does God require obedience for terms of salvation; and a salvation from what ... Hell?

Salvation is from yourselves & the sin which dominates your desires & wills to crave & fulfill any and every lust for this world's attractions & conveniences! Just look at the amount of money which goes into all the advertisements. They know what man loves! On Sale Now! "You need this", is their come-on. No you don't need this; you just want or crave this! Again, salvation is from yourselves & the sin which controls you & ultimately, from the consequences of your sin - *eternal damnation* for not repenting of every form of greed & self fulfillment.

Does Jesus satisfy you... **really**? Or is there a need for more? What must you do to be saved? What does it mean to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? What have you told others? Or even worse, what gospel have you believed in?

We're not speaking of sinless perfection. We're speaking of repentance, contrition, & hatred of our personal sin! No man can be perfect in keeping the commandments. But to remain unrepentant and love our possessions, and our money – even if honestly working for it in desperate pursuit; though you are morally pursuing it, it is only for selfish gain, self gratification in order to control your surroundings of comfort. Love for God is behind the command, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me". And love for man in selfless giving, giving of your time, giving of your resources, and giving of your possessions is the summation of never lying to man, never taking from man, and never defrauding, hating or taking revenge upon man.

Rejoice not when your enemy falls. Rom 12:15 says, "Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep." Rejoice in others good fortunes. Don't compare yourself with others in:

1. Work: Your salary with others; your accomplishments against another; or praise's from the boss.
2. Home/Public: Glad that's not me; wish I had what he had; or he doesn't deserve that.
3. Church: He gets honor & recognition or does more than me; or how much does he give; or how can I benefit from this?

Why not be jealous for the honor and recognition given by the Lord? Why not be content with what the Lord has allotted you and like Job, say,

"The Lord gave me what I had, and the Lord has taken it away. Praise the name of the Lord!"

Why not lay up for yourselves, like Jesus said, “treasure in heaven and come, follow Me”, in verse 21? If you walk away from this lesson feeling bad saying, “Boy was I convicted over this”, but do not repent, you are no better off than this rich young ruler. He felt bad in the end and walked away, (v.22).

Can you return to your church and worship & pray & study with others if you fail to repent of your covetous heart? If so, you are greatly deceived and it's no wonder why our churches are powerless. And I might even say Christ-less. What does the power of God unto salvation produce? Is it not righteousness? Is not His wrath revealed against all ungodliness & unrighteousness? (Rom.1:16-18) I can see this rich young ruler rising from his knees, his disposition reflecting grief, turning 180 degrees from Jesus, and walking away – **publicly, for all to see!**

### **Further clarification, Verses 23-28**

(23) And Jesus, looking around, said to His disciples, "How hard it will be for those who are wealthy to enter the kingdom of God!" (24) The disciples were amazed at His words. But Jesus answered again and said to them, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! (25) "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God." (26) They were even more astonished and said to Him, "Then who can be saved?" (27) Looking at them, Jesus said, "With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God." (28) Peter began to say to Him, "Behold, we have left everything and followed You."

### **What does your bible say in the footnotes on this passage, or even in Matthew or Luke's account?**

If all it indicates is the rich young rulers failure to acknowledge his sin (instead of repentance) & his need to believe that Jesus is the Christ (instead of discipleship/fellowship), then why were Jesus' disciples “amazed at His words”, in verse 24? And why were they “more astonished” in verse 26, saying to Jesus, “Then who can be saved”? The disciples had already acknowledged their need for Jesus and were following Him! And now they were quite troubled with “His words” (v.24). They knew exactly what Jesus demanded in order to have eternal life. For Peter said in verse 28: "Behold, we have left everything and followed You."

... as if they were saying, “Haven't we?” Or, “Surely we have, right?”

Can you follow Jesus w/o surrendering the things which give you personal security, value, or substance for living? **What does it mean to come to Jesus; to follow Jesus?**

To come & follow Jesus is the characteristic of discipleship. “I will do what you ask, O Lord.” And then doing it! Fellowship demands obedience! It's to give up anything & all things which draw away our affections & thoughts – and keep us from saying, “What will Thou have me to do?” This is not a simple decision, it's costly. It's hard or difficult! For no ownership is new ownership!

We are invited to come to Jesus, and to follow Jesus on a spiritual journey; to enjoy of His company, to enjoy of His presence, and to be taught along the way by His Word through His Spirit. To become part of His great extended family, the Body of Christ throughout the world. And to be filled with hope in the closing days of our journey as we know of His promises and feel His comfort with us.

And the gift of eternal life is indeed free, if your heart is not filled or clinching onto other things. A person who will not turn from his sin, his possessions, his false religion, or his selfishness will find he cannot turn to Christ in faith.

So, the next time you hear, “you are saved by faith alone”, remember this lesson. It is *faith alone*, and not faith plus your possessions; *faith alone*, and not faith plus the comforts of life; *faith alone*, and

nothing else which robs the love which is due God & your neighbor. It's exchanging your life or losing your life for His name sake and the gospels, in order to have eternal life (Mark 8:35).

### **One last thought for those who might think this is not consistent with the Doctrines of Grace**

Calvinism demands *equally* both human responsibility and God's sovereignty in salvation. The text we've been looking at so far speaks only to our moral responsibility in salvation.

**Verse 27** speaks of God's sovereignty in salvation. And it says:

**“With people it is impossible, but not with God; for all things are possible with God.”**

This is the new birth. This is the work of God. When Jesus said, “Keep the Commandments”, He was requiring obedience from the rich young ruler. But he could not comply...

The Tablets of Stone in the Old Covenant did not give power to fulfill this. The New Covenant does! *Tablets of stone cannot be properly viewed or applied with hearts of stone.* Ezekiel 36:26-27 says,

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.”

This Ezekiel passage, (in the context of verses 22-31), speaks of God's sovereignty as does Mark 10:27 in our text today, “With people it is impossible, but not with God; all things are possible with God.” “Who can be saved”, asked the disciples? Those in whom God makes it possible! For with man it is impossible. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. For only God can change your nature, so **plead with Him for grace!**

Are you obedient by nature (as a result of the new nature) or are you disobedient by nature?

Do you have a heart of stone or a heart of flesh? The miracle of the new birth conquers the reigning power of disobedience, (Romans 6:20-22). And the rich young ruler did not have this.

### ***Time for some Questions & Notes***

- How was God's grace presented in this text?  
“...and you will have treasure in heaven”
- Was repentance required of the rich young ruler and how?  
“...go and sell all you possess and give to the poor”
- What about faith? Did Jesus call this man to believe?  
“and come, follow Me.”
- Did the rich young ruler have good news or bad news presented to him? Good news if he repented & believed; bad news, because “at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving”
- What was the good news presented to the rich young ruler?  
“...sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven”
- What is the link between obedience and repentance? Believing the words of Jesus.  
“go & sell all you possess & give to the poor, & you will have treasure in heaven; & come, follow Me.”
- What was the gift of God in this passage?  
“...and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”
- Did Jesus present to the rich young ruler a wonderful plan for his life?  
Yes, if he did what Jesus ask of him.
- Did Jesus genuinely love this rich man?  
“Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him”

### **Notes:**

#### **Romans 13:9-10, on love:**

(9) For this, "YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET," and if there is any other commandment, it is

summed up in this saying, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." (10) Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of *the* law.

You can fulfill the second half of God's table towards man morally, if you have no love for him. You'll love yourself! I'm an honorable man, you say. But you violate God's first table towards God Himself. If you love yourself in this way, how can you love God? And if you cannot love God (being selfless), then how could you possibly have any genuine love for man & thereby fulfill God's 2<sup>nd</sup> table?

### **Divine Sovereignty & Human Responsibility**

It is true that it's the kindness of God which leads you to repentance for life, (Rom. 2:4). But Luke 13:3 & 5 say, Unless YOU REPENT, you will all likewise perish. In other words, if God grants you repentance, you are not happy faced, jumping up & down, "I'm so happy I can repent, I'm so happy I can repent". It is grievously hard to die to self! But when done, you will not boast ...repentance was not on your wish list in the first place.

### **But it sounds like you are teaching salvation by "works"**

Those who wish to protect "grace" & Ephesians 2:8-9, "not of works", are thinking in terms of doing something in order to gain a reward. But we are not speaking of working, but dying – we are speaking of emptying of oneself of all personal interests, values, or ambitions, so that God alone can occupy the heart and be God. We are going against the very things which give us purpose and fulfillment for life so that God will be our only God. This is the faith which saves!

If a man named Aba Salami came to you and said, "I want to go to heaven, what must I do?" Would you quickly tell him, "It's not of works", to correct him? Or would you assume an honest question deserving an honest answer?

If you let him continue and he said, "I already have one god, I want your God also". Would you tell him it's a free gift and let him have his two gods? Or would you tell him he must do away with his idol? Americans do not have any temptation to embrace eastern idols; we have American idols – some are paperless securities, like stocks & funds or retirement plans & insurance policies, while other idols are people, places, or things.

The Rich Young Ruler would have heaven if he could have had it cheap. He would have parted with something for it if required, but to sell all was a hard saying. Salvation is free, but not cheap. How many people have made decisions for a cheap gospel? If any have been granted an easier way, then would not the rich young ruler have an apology due to him? No! We are the ones who need to change our gospel!